

REMARKS

Examination of the application is requested. No additional fees are seen to be required. If any additional fees are due, however, the Commissioner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1482, in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds, P.C., for any additional fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully Submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS, P.C.

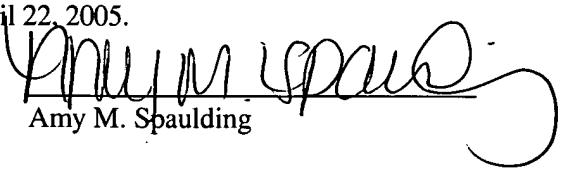


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Dated: April 22, 2005

CERTIFICATE OF MAIL

I hereby certify that the enclosed preliminary amendment is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as Express Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on April 22, 2005.



Amy M. Spaulding

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Corte et al.
Serial No.: Herewith
Filed: Herewith
Group Art Unit: Unknown
Examiner: Unknown
Title: A WHEEL AND A WHEEL DISC

SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION TRANSMITTAL

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

The attached substitute specification includes no new matter. Accordingly a marked-up copy of the substitute specification showing the matter being added to and the matter being deleted from the specification of record has been submitted.

Respectfully submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS



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A WHEEL AND A WHEEL DISC

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The application claims priority to PCT Patent Application No. PCT/BR2003/000146 which was filed on October 9, 2003, which claims priority to Brazilian Patent Application No. PI0204356-4 which was filed on October 23, 2002.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to a wheel, preferably a stamped wheel, including comprising a wheel disc having provided with multiple bores that enable the wheel disc for enabling it to be fixed to wheel hubs of various vehicle models, as well as to a wheel disc configured in this way. Description of the Prior Art

The present vehicle market of vehicles is more and more every competitive, which have been causing merges have caused mergers between large assembly plants to ensure for the purpose of ensuring greater competitiveness and a greater ability to withstand market capacity of standing the pressures of the market. As a result, these novel conglomerates will companies try to minimize, as much far as possible, their costs and to increase the productivity. With regard to the wheels, there it is an increase in the trend preferable to use wheels eff from the same supplier and of the same model for several lines of vehicles.

In the specific case of the wheels, there is an aggravating factor, namely the fact that the vehicles of Vehicles made in each assembly plant have use different projects wheels. As already known, a wheel is formed by a rim and a disc, and the disc being is provided with a central portion having at least three through bores for fixing the wheel to a wheel hub and, as a rule, a central bore. The This bores are arranged made concentrically around the central bore, but the diameter (of the circumference) formed from the respective central points of thesaid bores varies from assembly plant to assembly plant.

For example, Let us take as an example of this trend the case of the companies FIAT and General Motors (GM), which have recently associated with each other. For the FIAT, wherein the diameter (of the circumference) formed from the central point of thesaid through bores for fixing that fix the vehicle disc from FIAT is of 98 mm, and the boring wheel disc includes four comprising 4 bores in this case, while the vehicles. Vehicles from GM use

wheels ~~having 4 including four bores~~, and a diameter ~~from the central point of the bores is of~~ 100 mm.

However, ~~there are~~ some models of these vehicles and ~~models~~ from other assembly companies that use various other ~~boring~~ configurations of ~~boring~~, which have other diameter values, as well as a ~~different~~ ~~larger or smaller~~ number of fixation bores.

~~To In order to~~ solve this problem, ~~one has developed~~ wheels ~~that comprise~~ ~~have been~~ developed that include a disc provided with a central portion having various ~~boring~~ configurations of ~~boring~~, with ~~varying~~ ~~that have various~~ diameters and ~~various~~ number of bores. ~~But these proposed solutions also comprise~~ ~~These wheels include~~ an adapter positioned ~~so as to overlap~~ ~~that overlaps~~ the central portion of the wheel disc, ~~for positioning and fixing~~ ~~that positions and fixes~~ the wheel to the vehicle hub, according to project determinations. This type of wheel is disclosed in U.S. Patent No. US Pat. 3,166, 357.

However, ~~the~~ ~~this~~ ~~wheel in question~~, which is stamped, ~~and~~ has a ~~smaller~~ ~~reduced~~ thickness at the central region of the disc, ~~which enables~~ ~~enabling~~ it to be easily stamped, ~~but~~ decrease ~~the~~ ~~The~~ resistance of the wheel fixed to the vehicle ~~decreases~~, since the through bores are very close to each other. When the wheel is fixed to the vehicle hub, it is subjected to a ~~very~~ great tightening pressure and may be ~~damaged~~ ~~damages~~ at ~~that~~ ~~the~~ (those) point(s) where pressure has been applied, due to its thinness. In this particular case, ~~the problem has been solved by means of an~~ ~~a~~ ~~thicker~~ adapter ~~that is thicker and~~ ~~that~~ cooperates with the ~~existing~~ ~~thickness existing~~ on the wheel disc ~~has been used to solve this problem~~, thus increasing the final thickness of the assembly and distributing the load resulting from the tightening of the screws ~~throughout its extent~~.

Brazilian documents PI 9204344-5 and PI 9300987-9, ~~in turn, discloses~~ ~~disclose~~ light alloys cast wheels, which ~~have~~ ~~employ~~ the same concept of the wheel presented by ~~the above mentioned US Pat.~~ U.S. Patent No. 3,166, 357. The bores ~~existing~~ in the central portion of the wheel disc ~~are~~ extend radially, and ~~this~~ ~~the central~~ portion receives, in an overlapped manner, an adapter disc provided with a variety of different bores that are compatible with a determined number of automobiles. The three documents cited above use adapters that increase the final cost of the wheel and makes it difficult to fix the wheel to the vehicle hub.

Brazilian Document PI 9203685-6 discloses a wheel made of a light alloy, which ~~includes~~ ~~comprises~~ a disc provided with a central portion having eight bores, forming ~~which~~

form two sets of four bores each. Each set of bores includes comprise four bores arranged concentrically to the central bore of the wheel disc, thus forming a circumference of a particular diameter. In this way, one makes the bores having have circumferences of different diameters. However, the wheels of light alloy are manufactured of completely differently different manufacture and are much more expensive and, therefore, they. Therefore, these wheels do not originally equip economical and utility vehicles, which limits their penetration into the market and, consequently, their sales sale potential. For this reason, they these wheels are not easily hardly accessible to a public that is not wealthy, since because this type of wheel may be five times as expensive as the stamped-steel wheel.

The wheels made of light alloy are also more expensive because for various reasons, namely: the need for a material that has having a higher final cost, as for example aluminum, is needed, and the machining of these materials consumes which consumes much electric energy; in order. Also, to be casted, the wheel made of light alloy needs more manufacture material than steel wheels to provide additional, so that more strength can be provided for its utilization. All these additional costs are end up being passed on to the final consumer, which greatly raises the cost of this type of wheel.

The wheel made of light alloy are made of a technically fragile material, that is, they the material deforms very little and may break after being exposed to stand a determined strain, after which they merely break, presenting little deformation, while the wheels. Wheels of steel deform and, consequently, may prevent an accident, since they collapse to by collapsing they prevent an immediate leakage of air out of the tire, thus enabling a less skillful driver to control the vehicle. Wheels made In the case of the wheels of light alloy, on the contrary, may burst immediately the bursting is immediate.

There are other drawbacks to for the user of the stamped steel wheels off from the prior art there is another drawback. When the consumer changes the vehicle and intends to continue with them for use the wheels with a future change of vehicle, he often can not make cannot use the wheels of them on the new vehicle. This occurs since, when the mark and/or model of the new vehicle is different, because the bore diameter of the wheel disc for fixing the wheel disc to the hub is can be different from that of the preceding wheel if the vehicle model is different. Therefore, in these cases the consumer can not cannot continue to use the same wheels.

Objects of the InventionSUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide a wheel that is preferably stamped from steel that includes, comprising a wheel rim and a wheel disc associated to each other. The wheel disc is provided with includes a central portion that has having a central bore and at least two sets of fixing bores, which are concentric thereto to the central bore. Another objective of the invention is to provide a wheel disc thus configured as described above.

Brief Description of the Invention

The objects of the present invention are achieved by means of a wheel, particularly for use on vehicles a vehicle, including comprising a wheel rim and a wheel disc associable to each other, the. The wheel disc is being provided with a central portion which includes comprises a region for accommodating the a wheel hub of the vehicle and, around which at least six fixing bores are arranged, wherein. The the fixing bores configure at least one a first set of bores that defined defining a first circumference that has having a first diameter, and a second set of bores that defined defining a second circumference that has having a second diameter different from the first diameter. The the wheel is associated to the wheel hub of the vehicle by direct association of at least three fixing elements with the first set of bores or the second set of bores and through the respective fixing bores.

Also, the objectives of the present invention are achieved by means of a wheel disc, particularly associable to a wheel rim, that forms forming a wheel for use on vehicles, provided with a vehicle. The wheel includes a central portion that comprises having a region for accommodating the wheel of the vehicle and, around which at least six fixing bores are arranged, wherein. The the fixing bores configure at least one a first set of bores that defined defining a first circumference that has having a first diameter, and a second set of bores that defined defining a second circumference that has having a second diameter different from the first one; the diameter. The disc is directly associable to the wheel hub of the vehicle by direct association of at least three fixing elements with the first set of bores or the and second set of bores and through the respective fixing bores.

The present invention has many the following advantages, among others:

1) decrease of. For one, the areas area of the assembly cells in the assembling plant decreases, since the different because there are fewer types of wheels to be assembled

drastically decrease, thus increasing in the useful the amount of space of the assembling plant

2). Additionally, logistic are easier due to the decrease in the variety of wheels produced;

3). Finally, reduction of the cost of wheel-manufacture cost, is reduced due to the economies of scale.

Brief Description of the Drawing

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

The present invention will now be described in greater detail with reference to the embodiments presented in the drawings. The figures show:

Figure 1 shows: a detail view of the central portion of the wheel disc of a first embodiment of a stamped wheel from the prior art;

Figure 2 shows: a schematic detail view of the central portion of the wheel disc of the first embodiment of the stamped wheel from the prior art;

Figure 3 shows: a detail view of the central portion of the wheel disc of a second embodiment of the stamped wheel from the prior art;

Figure 4 shows: a schematic detail view of the central portion of the wheel disc of a second embodiment of a wheel from the prior art;

Figure 5 shows: a front view of a first embodiment of the wheel according to the present invention;

Figure 6 shows: a schematic view of the central portion of the wheel disc of the first embodiment of the wheel according to the present invention;

Figure 7 shows: a detail view of the central portion of the wheel disc of a second embodiment of the wheel according to the present invention; and

Figure 8 shows: a detail view of the central portion of the wheel disc of a third embodiment of the wheel according to the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Figures

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

As ~~shown can be seen in Figures~~ ~~figures~~ 1 to 4, the stamped wheels ~~off~~ from the prior art are configured specifically for specifically meeting the projects of vehicles of each assembly plant ~~and~~. Each stamped wheel includes, ~~therefore~~, ~~they have~~ a central bore 1' of ~~the~~ wheel disc 3' ~~having~~, ~~which has~~ a diameter 2a' or 2b' (which will be explained in greater detail below), according to which depends on the type of vehicle on which ~~they the wheel~~ will be used.

Each set of bores includes~~comprises~~ at least three fixing through-bores, which may vary from four, five, six to ten bores, ~~and the~~. The set of bores ~~off~~ for the vehicles in each assembly plant may have~~present~~ different diameters.

According to a preferred embodiment shown in Figure 5, the present invention includes~~comprises~~ a wheel 10, preferably stamped from steel, which has~~comprises~~ a substantially cylindrical wheel rim 11 and a substantially circular wheel disc 3. The wheel disc 3 and the wheel rim 11 are associated to each other, preferably by welding, but any other means may be used.

The wheel disc 3 includes~~comprises~~ a substantially circular central portion 1 that, ~~which~~ defines a region for accommodating a wheel hub. Preferably, the accommodating region configures a central bore 1a, which may be a projection facing outwardly ~~that defines~~ ~~outwards~~ and defining a cavity for accommodating ~~the~~ tip of an axle or else~~have~~ any other configuration. At~~Around~~ the accommodating region, at least six fixing through-bores 2 and 2' are, ~~a~~ concentrically arranged around the accommodating region. Preferably~~Also~~ preferably, the bores 2 and 2' are located in the central portion 1, but ~~there may be~~ wheels ~~on~~ which ~~these~~the bores 2 and 2' can be~~are~~ located more outwardly and, closer to the wheel rim 11 on some wheels. The bores 2 and 2' are, ~~but~~ always concentric, ~~and~~ one concentrically. It should be noted that the fixing bores 2 and 2' are preferably formed during the process of stamping the wheel, but they may be made by any other manufacturing processes.

The bores 2 and 2' are arranged around the central bore 1a, or an equivalent one, configuring at least a first set of bores and a second sets~~set~~ of bores that define two imaginary circumferences with different concentric diameters 2a and, 2b concentric

~~therewith~~. Preferably, each set of bores is formed by four different bores 2 and, 2' having first and second diameters 2a and, 2b, preferably of 100 mm and 98 mm, respectively. ~~Evidently the sets~~
The number of bores in each set of bores may vary in the number of bores they have, depending upon the ~~amount~~number of fixing means existing on the wheel hub, as for example, fixing screws or studs, which will fix the wheel to the wheel hub through ~~these~~the bores 2 and, 2'.

As already mentioned, each set of bores 2 and 2' has a diameter 2a or 2b that is different from the diameter of the other set of bores, so that the wheel 10 disclosed herein can be used on vehicles having a wheel hub with ~~respective diameter values~~different diameters.

Thus, if the user buys a set of wheels 10 according to the present invention for his ~~car~~vehicle, but intends to change ~~it~~the vehicle within a ~~given~~given period of time and wishes to keep the wheels 10, ~~since they have two sets of bores with different diameters 2a, 2b, he may therefore use them~~the wheels 10 on the new vehicle since the wheels 10 have two sets of bores 2 and 2' with different diameters 2a and 2b, in case providing there is compatibility with regard to the number of bores 2 and, 2' and the diameters 2a and, 2b.

Following the same concept, a second and a third preferred embodiments of the present invention are ~~foreseen, as can be seen shown~~ in figuresFigures 7 and 8, respectively. In these embodiments of the wheel 10, the bores 2 and 2' of one set of bores are open and the bores 2 and 2' of the other set of bores are closed with covers 5, which may preferably be removed if they are used on another vehicle. This embodiment of the present wheel 10 equips vehicles as an original component from the factory. The covers 5 also help the user to remove/replace the wheel 10 onto the vehicle during ~~the~~the maintenance service, since the four bores 2 and 2' that he will use ~~remain are~~ uncovered, and the four other bores 2 and 2' remain hidden, ~~thus preventing~~ the wheel 10 from being wrongly ~~fixed or assembled~~ and preventing confusion. Further, if the user decides to use the wheel 10 on a vehicle compatible with the set of bores 2 and 2' stamped in it, he may reposition the covers 5 ~~adequately as needed~~. The covers 5 are preferably secured by pressure, but they may be fixed onto the wheel 10 by any other means.

In the exemplificationexample of the GM/FIAT ~~group~~vehicles, the solution of using ~~for~~ different sets of bores ~~between~~2 and 2' for the vehicles from the two assembly plants ~~would be achieved, since this is possible. The FIAT~~carsvehicles have a 98 mm

(~~millimeters~~millimeters) diameter configuration of the bores around the central portion 1 of the wheel disc 3, and ~~those from~~the GM vehicles have a 100 mm (~~millimeters~~millimeters) configuration, which are defined by the respective factory projects. ~~The group may purchase a~~A single model of wheel 10 can be purchased and equip both the vehicles ~~indistinctly can be equipped~~ with ~~the~~a wheel 10 provided with two bore 2 and 2' configurations. ~~Thee~~a configuration, and also provide a vehicle ~~with has~~ wheels having, for instance, the 10 with a set of bores ~~ef~~ for the FIAT vehicle, and ~~the~~a hidden set of bores for ~~use on~~the GM vehicles, thus bringing about the sought after scale economyproviding an economy of scale.

~~Determined~~The wheel ~~hubs might present~~hub can include a guiding pin ~~for to help position~~optimizing the work of positioning the wheel 10 in place, and the guiding pin ~~which~~ fits into a bore 9 existing in the adequate or compatible wheels from the prior art. ~~In the case of the wheel of the present invention, the~~The guiding pin ~~would~~can be accommodated in one of the bores 2 and ,2' of the other set of bores ~~existing~~ in the wheel 10.

As already mentioned, ~~for the large conglomerates that~~companies have various ~~marks~~vehicles in their production lines, and the wheels 10 of the present invention makes ~~it described herein are~~advantageous, ~~since it is~~ possible to provide ~~them with~~ different bore diameters 2a and , 2b, with two or more sets of bores 2 and 2', but concordant with the ~~marks~~vehicles of the ~~conglomerate~~, bringing about ~~economy~~company. This provides economies of scale, rapidrapidity in production and reduction of the, a reduced numbers of processes ~~ef~~ for manufacturing the various models of wheel, ~~as well as reduction of~~and a reduced stock.

Another advantage for these ~~conglomerates~~companies is the optimization of assembly cells, which ~~comprise~~ include a small assembly line within a general vehicle-production line. ~~In the case of the wheels, the~~The vehicle assembly company ~~make available~~ to the ~~provides~~ a wheel supplier a space within the factory. ~~In this way, the~~The wheel supplier ~~is~~ associated with the tire supplier and, in a joint process, ~~makes available~~ they make a wheel-tire assembly ~~available which is~~, already assembled, balanced ~~and~~, calibrated and, ready for mounting onto the vehicle, ~~thus getting rid the~~. This reduces the number of issues ~~relating to assembly vehicle company of further concerns~~.

The wheel 10 of the present invention ~~brings the following~~provides many advantages for the vehicle assembly company and for the supplying company, ~~among numberless others~~:

— For one, reduction of the area of the assembly cells is reduced because there are a fewer number of, since the different types of wheel that will be assembled drastically decrease wheels, entailing an increase in increasing the useful space of the assembly plant. Additionally, the assembly plant does not have to worry has fewer concerns about the mistakes of delivery, or mistakes and with the type of wheel received, since because the wheel may be used on various models of vehicle. The; optimization of the work at the head office of the wheel supplier, which can maintain only needs to fulfill one shipment of wheels 10 for various assembly plants, without having to worryworrying about separating various types of wheel wheels, thus saving on transport for the various models that would have to be delivered, therefore reducing work. As; as already mentioned, because only one type of wheel 10 is being delivered, there is the reduction or the occurrence of mistake in the delivery mistakes because, due to the fact of only one type of wheel 10 is provided. Therefore, the wheel supplier can focus on, whereby one will be concerned only with the number of orders from each assembly plant. The; reduction of the cost of manufacturing the wheel 10, by virtue is also reduced because of the scale economyeconomies of scale.

In order to To fix the wheel 10 of the present invention onto the wheel hub of the vehicle, it is enough to position it the wheel is positioned with the set of bores that are adequate for the vehicle involved and to tighten the screws or other fixing elements are tightened. There is no need for using any type of adapter or any other additional element, and the procedure being is identical to that the procedure used in the case of the conventional wheel. This means that the The fixing elements associate the wheel directly with the wheel hub without the need for needing adapters or other elements.

A preferred embodiment of the invention having been described, one should understand that the scope of the present invention embraces other possible variations, being limited only by the contents of the accompanying claims, which include the possible equivalents.

These and other features of the present invention can be best understood from the following specification and drawings, the following of which is a brief description. Although a preferred embodiment of this invention has been disclosed, a worker of ordinary skill in this art would recognize that certain modifications would come within the scope of this invention.

For that reason, the following claims should be studied to determine the true scope and content of this invention.

The foregoing description is only exemplary of the principles of the invention. Many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teachings. It is, therefore, to be understood that within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced otherwise than using the example embodiments which have been specifically described. For that reason the following claims should be studied to determine the true scope and content of this invention.